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Letter dated 17 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in July 2008 (see annex). The document was prepared under my responsibility, after consultation with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Le Luong Minh**
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Annex to the letter dated 17 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Viet Nam (July 2008)

During the presidency of Viet Nam in July 2008, the Security Council engaged in an extensive programme of work and took appropriate actions on a wide agenda of sensitive issues in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe, including developments in the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, the Sudan, West Africa, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nepal, the Middle East, Lebanon, Kosovo and Abkhazia, Georgia. The Council was also engaged in other matters relating to its subsidiary bodies.

During July 2008, the Security Council held 19 meetings, of which 16 were public ones, including an open debate on children and armed conflict and another on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Besides three private meetings, of which two were with troop-contributing countries, the Council also held consultations of the whole on 17 occasions. In addition, the Council adopted six resolutions and three presidential statements, and agreed on five statements to the press. The Council was not able to adopt a draft resolution on the situation in Zimbabwe under the item "Peace and security in Africa".

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Pham Gia Khiem, presided over the open debate on children and armed conflict and read out a presidential statement on the issue (S/PRST/2008/28) on 17 July.

Africa

Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

On 15 July, in consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, on the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). Members of the Council expressed their concerns about the volatile security situation in Chad as well as the humanitarian situation there, while condemning attacks on humanitarian workers. Emphasizing the importance of the political process and dialogue as the only solution to the conflict in Chad, members of the Council called upon all parties concerned in Chad to immediately renounce violence, engage in the political process and ensure safety for the operations of humanitarian workers. They also expressed full support for the deployment of MINURCAT and the European Union operation and the coordination between those missions and other United Nations missions in the subregion, while urging Chad and the Sudan to fully implement the Dakar Agreement and other relevant agreements.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 24 July, the Council held a private meeting with countries contributing troops to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). In the

consultations of the whole that followed, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Choi Young-Jin, briefed the Council on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and related activities of UNOCI, especially on preparations for the national elections on 30 November 2008. Members of the Council in general supported and encouraged all the parties concerned to maintain the momentum of reconciliation, sustained dialogue and cooperation in the light of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and the supplementary agreements, thereby helping to lead the elections to success and keep the peace process in the best interest of the Ivorian people.

On 29 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1826 (2008), by which it renewed the mandates of UNOCI and the French forces which support it until 31 January 2009, in particular to support the organization in Côte d'Ivoire of free, open, fair and transparent elections.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 23 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno, briefed the Council on recent activities of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), emphasizing that notwithstanding certain encouraging developments with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi communiqué and Goma peace agreement, the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remained volatile and worrisome. Despite its relatively efficient operations, the overstretched MONUC still faced many challenges for lack of necessary resources and capacity. Some Council members voiced their grave concerns over human rights violations, gender-based violence and impunity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo while others underlined the need to put more pressure on illegal armed groups still operating in the region. Members of the Council expressed their support for the continued assistance of MONUC to the peace process in the country.

Eritrea and Ethiopia

On 28 July, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/496), the Secretary-General informed the Council that Ethiopia and Eritrea had rejected the options put before them for a future United Nations engagement.

On 30 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1827 (2008), by which it terminated the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), effective on 31 July 2008, and emphasized that this termination was without prejudice to the obligations of Ethiopia and Eritrea under the Algiers Agreements. The Council, inter alia, demanded that Ethiopia and Eritrea comply fully with their obligations under those agreements, show maximum restraint and refrain from any threat or use of force against each other, and avoid provocative military activities. The Council supported the ongoing efforts by the Secretary-General and the international community to engage with Ethiopia and Eritrea to help them to implement the Algiers Agreements, to normalize their relations, to promote stability, and to lay the foundation for a comprehensive and lasting peace between them. Members of the Council also requested the Secretary-General to further explore with Ethiopia and Eritrea the possibility of a United Nations presence in Ethiopia and Eritrea in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Rwanda

On 10 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1823 (2008), by which it terminated the prohibitions imposed by paragraphs 9 and 10 of resolution 1011 (1995) and dissolved the Committee established pursuant to resolution 918 (1994) concerning Rwanda. The Council also stressed the need for countries in the region to ensure that arms and related materiel delivered to them are not diverted to or used by illegal armed groups.

Somalia

On 8 July, the Council issued a statement to the press, condemning the assassination of the head of the United Nations Development Programme in Somalia, Ali Osman Ahmed.

On 23 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, briefed the Council on the situation there, on the basis of the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/466). The Special Representative informed the Council that the new agreement between the Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia was initialled on 9 June and witnessed by a number of observer States and international organizations, including France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union. He warned, however, that the agreement would not bring peace overnight, and urged the Council to consider rehatting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) or deploying an international stabilization force, as suggested in the Secretary-General's latest report on developments in the country, or establishing a separate United Nations peacekeeping force. Appealing for the Council's urgent assistance in consolidating national reconciliation efforts, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somalia, Ali Ahmed Jama Jengeli, suggested that AMISOM should be the nucleus of any future United Nations stabilization or peacekeeping force. Speaking before the Council, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Ramtane Lamamra, affirmed that AMISOM stood ready for ultimate inclusion in an international stabilization force requested in the Djibouti Agreement, and informed the Council that AMISOM was facing a severe lack of funding and logistical support. He also indicated that a strong naval component would allow the proposed United Nations force to extend its focus beyond Mogadishu.

Sudan

On 9 July, the Council issued a statement to the press on the attack of 8 July 2008 against the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), in which members of the Council condemned the attack in the strongest possible terms, called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, and expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims and solidarity to UNAMID staff.

On 16 July, the Council held a closed meeting with the countries contributing troops to UNAMID. In the consultations of the whole that followed, the Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in Darfur and the deployment of UNAMID. In particular, the Under-Secretary-General provided details about the attack on 8 July against a UNAMID

convoy, which had resulted in seven deaths and the wounding of 22 personnel. After the consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/27), by which it reiterated its condemnation of the attack on 8 July on African Union-United Nations peacekeepers in Darfur, welcomed the United Nations investigation and the Government of the Sudan's statement that it would assist the United Nations in this process, underlined its determination to take action against the perpetrators of the attack, and called on all parties to agree to a cessation of hostilities, to engage in the political process and to cooperate fully with the deployment of UNAMID and respect its security and freedom of movement.

On 31 July, after intensive consultations, the Council adopted resolution 1828 (2008), by which it renewed the mandate of UNAMID for another 12-month period, until 31 July 2009. The result of the Council's vote was 14 in favour (Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom, Viet Nam) and 1 abstention (United States). The Council also took note of a communiqué issued by the African Union on 21 July 2008, and the concerns raised by members of the African Union Peace and Security Council regarding potential developments subsequent to the application by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court of 14 July 2008 against the President of the Sudan, and took note of their intention to consider these matters further. The Council welcomed the agreement of the Government of the Sudan to the UNAMID deployment plan, commended the contribution made by troop- and police-contributing countries, expressed support for the political process, and called on all parties concerned to end violence, engage in the peace process and fully cooperate in the deployment of UNAMID. After the adoption, 13 Council members spoke in explanation of their vote.

Peace and security in Africa: Zimbabwe

On 8 July, the Council heard a briefing during which the Deputy Secretary-General informed Council members about the political situation in Zimbabwe and the discussion of it at the African Union Summit at Sharm el-Sheikh. The Deputy Secretary-General said that in the declaration adopted at the Summit, the African Union called for continued mediation efforts by the Southern Africa Development Community. The Council then proceeded to informal consultations where Council members had an informal exchange of views with the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios. There was agreement among Council members on the assessment that political transition was needed in Zimbabwe, while there were differences of views on how best to support this path. Council members had a discussion about the rationale of a draft resolution on Zimbabwe.

On 11 July, at a meeting held under the item "Peace and security in Africa", a draft resolution on Zimbabwe was put to the vote. The draft resolution provided for, inter alia, the imposition of an arms embargo on Zimbabwe as well as a travel ban and financial freeze against President Robert Mugabe and 13 senior officials in the Government of Zimbabwe. The result of the voting was 9 in favour (Belgium, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Italy, Panama, United Kingdom, United States), 5 against (China, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam), and 1 abstention (Indonesia). Owing to the negative votes of permanent members of the Council, the draft resolution was not adopted.

On 29 July, during consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing on the political and humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Most Council members took note of and expressed support for the signing on 21 July 2008 of the memorandum of understanding between Zanu-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change and at the same time affirmed their support for mediation efforts by the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. However, there remained differences in the positions of Council members on the issue. Some Council members were concerned about the limited progress in the peace talks between Zanu-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change, while others emphasized the success of the peaceful approach to the Zimbabwe election dispute, stating that more time and efforts were needed to promote the process of political transition and national reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

Middle East

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 22 July, the Council convened an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, during which it heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, who indicated a number of encouraging developments across the region and stressed the importance of achieving further visible progress in peaceful negotiations, consolidating the ceasefire and resolving the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and improving the livelihood of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Most representatives called upon the parties concerned to renounce violence, implement agreements, abide by their obligations under international law, particularly human rights and humanitarian law, and take further concrete action to advance the peace process towards its stated goals on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Annapolis Conference.

Lebanon

On 9 July, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Director of the Asia and Middle East Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In the face of developments and challenges on the ground that have had complicated impacts on the process pursuant to resolution 1701 (2006), members of the Council continued to support full implementation of that resolution, especially with regard to respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders, the protection of the assets and livelihood of civilians, and the safety and security of international peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel, thus helping to achieve a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution.

Oil-for-food programme

On 25 July, the delegation of Costa Rica sent a letter to the President of the Security Council regarding the report of the Working Group that was submitted at the end of the month (see S/2008/492). In that letter, Costa Rica requested that some

additional information be included in that document with a view to facilitating the closure of the programme without exposing the United Nations Organization, including the Council, to new criticism about the financial management of the oil-for-food programme.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 9 July, the Council held a debate in the presence of high-level United Nations officials and 26 national representatives, including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and Pakistan, on the security and humanitarian challenges in Afghanistan, and the ways to advance the outcomes of the Paris Conference in support of the country. In his briefing to the Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, stressed the need to deliver aid more effectively and accountably, and asserted that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) would be able to play its role only if significant additional human and financial resources were provided quickly. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, briefed the Council on his recent visit to Afghanistan, saying it was clear that the country's humanitarian needs were serious and growing, and more had to be done to improve the protection of civilians. While expressing concern over the security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, members of the Council welcomed the outcome of the Paris Conference, the launch of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Speakers concurred with the conclusion of the Secretary-General in his report that more resources were necessary to meet the strengthened mandate of UNAMA and achieve defined priorities, and supported a broad, coordinated and comprehensive approach to existing challenges in Afghanistan.

On 11 July, in a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/26), the Council welcomed the outcome of the Paris Conference held on 12 June, which raised more than $20 billion in pledges for Afghanistan's development strategy, as well as the commitment by the Government of Afghanistan to promote security, good governance, the rule of law, human rights and socio-economic development and to pursue political and economic reform, including concrete steps to combat corruption. Recalling the strengthened role of UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in leading and coordinating international civilian efforts in the country through an integrated approach, while reinforcing Afghan ownership, the Council called on all relevant actors to give their full support to the Mission. It also endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation regarding the need for much greater substantive, administrative and security resources to enable UNAMA to fulfil its mandate. The Council reaffirmed once again its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. The Council expressed its strong concern about the security situation in Afghanistan and stressed the need to continue to address the threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, illegal armed groups, criminals and those involved in the narcotics trade and in the diversion of chemical precursors.

Myanmar

On 24 July, in consultations of the whole, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, briefed the Council on preparations for his upcoming visit to the country. Members of the Council then exchanged views on the ways to find a comprehensive solution to the situation in Myanmar.

Nepal

On 18 July, following the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process (S/2008/454), the Council held a debate during which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Nepal, Ian Martin, presented the Secretary-General's recommendations on the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), and outlined the latest developments in the country. Addressing the Council, the representative of Nepal pointed out that most of the Mission's mandate had been accomplished, but the country had yet to conclude its arrangements for the cantonment of Maoist armed personnel, which were being monitored by UNMIN. He added that his Government had decided to request an extension of the Mission for another six months at a smaller scale to engage in the remainder of its mandate. In their statements, most speakers welcomed the positive developments in Nepal and supported the extension of a scaled-down United Nations special political mission in the country, focusing mainly on monitoring the management of arms and armed personnel of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Nepal Army. Speakers also emphasized the importance of ensuring a participative and inclusive political process in the country and indicated that measures to support peace in Nepal had to go hand in hand with an economic programme based on poverty reduction.

On 23 July, acting on a request from the Government of Nepal and the Secretary-General's recommendations, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1825 (2008), by which it extended the mandate of UNMIN for six months in order to allow UNMIN to complete the remainder of its mandate as established under resolution 1740 (2007) in line with the agreement of 25 June among the country's political parties. The Council called upon all parties to take full advantage of the expertise and readiness of the special political mission in Nepal to support the peace process and facilitate the completion of outstanding aspects of its mandate, and to work together in a spirit of consensus and compromise in order to continue the transition to a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future. The Council concurred with the Secretary-General's view that the current monitoring arrangements should not be necessary for a substantial further period, expressed its expectation that they would be concluded within the period of the mandate, and endorsed his recommendations for a phased, gradual drawdown and withdrawal of the United Nations mission.

Europe

Georgia

On 21 July, the Council held a private meeting to consider the situation in Georgia at the request of the representative of Georgia contained in his letter dated 10 July 2008 addressed to the President of the Council (S/2008/453). Members of

the Council had an exchange of views. The representative of Georgia was invited to express his opinion.

On 29 July, in consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, on the basis of the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/480). He informed the Council that, after a period of relative stability, the past four months had witnessed a resurgence of tensions stemming from, inter alia, clear disagreements as to what constituted observance or violation of the ceasefire regime. He stressed the need for strict observance of the ceasefire and separation-of-forces regime in the area of responsibility of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) in order to prevent a resumption of hostilities and create a climate conducive to dialogue between the two sides. He also appealed to the Abkhaz side to observe the freedom of movement of UNOMIG and to the Georgian side to observe the freedom of movement of the CIS peacekeeping force in their respective areas of responsibility. In the discussions, members of the Council strongly condemned the bombings and roadside explosions that occurred from 29 June to 6 July on both sides of the ceasefire line, and called upon the parties concerned to exercise utmost restraint, refrain from acts of violence which might further complicate the situation, promote confidence-building measures and show their political will to settle their differences through peaceful means.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

On 25 July, at a meeting held on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2008/458), the Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo and Head of UNMIK, Lamberto Zannier, who drew the Council's attention to the fact that the fundamental changes on the ground had contributed to "a profoundly new operating reality for the Mission". He added that, under the Secretary-General's package of proposals, the capacity of UNMIK would be reduced in areas where it could no longer function effectively and enhanced in others, with particular attention to minorities and ensuring the rights of all communities. He also informed the Council that the Mission, in principle, continued to retain executive authority for police, judiciary and Customs functions throughout Kosovo and that discussions had been held between the Mission and representatives of the European Union Rule of Law Mission on future cooperation, and that the two sides were close to concluding an agreement, by which the European Union Mission was expected to deploy under United Nations authority and in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), and the mission in Kosovo of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe was also expected to continue as part of the reconfigured UNMIK, in the areas of promoting democratic values and protecting the interests of all communities.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Vuk Jeremić, and Skender Hyseni of Kosovo also both addressed the Council.

General issues

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 7, 8 and 10 July, the Council issued three statements to the press, in which members of the Council strongly condemned the terrorist attacks that occurred in Islamabad on 6 July, at the Indian Embassy in Kabul on 7 July, and outside the United States Consulate General in Istanbul on 9 July, causing numerous deaths and injuries. Members of the Council reiterated their determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 2 July, in consultations of the whole, the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Ambassador Marcello Spatafora of Italy, presented his 90-day report in accordance with paragraph 12 (g) of resolution 1718 (2006), which covered the work of the Committee during the period from 3 April to 2 July 2008.

Children and armed conflict

On 17 July, the Council held an open debate on children and armed conflict, presided by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Pham Gia Khiem. The Secretary-General and 60 other participants addressed the Council. In his statement, the Secretary-General commended the Council for its efforts in dealing with the issue, and emphasized that poverty and underdevelopment could make children more vulnerable to exploitation and violence. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, requested the Council to expand the scope of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, and to concentrate on fighting the impunity of persistent and grave violators of children's rights in situations of armed conflict. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on progress that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had made in protecting children, and said that the Department was developing a departmental policy to better guide its work. Among other speakers, the representative of France, Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Jean-Maurice Ripert, briefed the Council on the annual report on the activities of the Working Group (S/2008/455). At the end of the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/28), in which it, inter alia, reaffirmed the need for States parties to comply with their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto, and for armed groups distinct from the State to refrain from recruiting or using children in hostilities, urged States that had not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to those instruments, requested the Secretary-General to provide additional administrative support in order for the Working Group to continue to fully carry out its mandate in an effective manner, and recognized the important role of education in areas of armed conflict as a means to achieve the goal of halting and preventing recruitment and re-recruitment of children.

International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

On 18 July, in response to a letter from the Secretary-General dated 13 June 2008 (A/62/896-S/2008/436) addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, transmitting a letter dated 6 June 2008 from the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1824 (2008), by which it extended the mandate of the permanent and ad litem judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to enhance the effectiveness of trial proceedings and contribute towards ensuring the implementation of the completion strategy.

Cross-border issues in West Africa

On 18 July, in consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Said Djinnit, on recent activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA). Members of the Council largely noted with satisfaction the initial and important progress made in ending conflicts, promoting national reconciliation and socio-economic reconstruction in the subregion, particularly in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. They shared the concerns about daunting challenges confronting West African countries such as pervasive poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, organized transnational crime, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and other cross-border and cross-cutting problems. Members of the Council continued to support the important role played by the United Nations, the Peacebuilding Commission, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and UNOWA in assisting the West African countries in consolidating the peace and strengthening post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.